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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 002913

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/27/2014

TAGS: MOPS MARR PREL IT AFGHANISTAN

SUBJECT: ITALY/AFGHANISTAN: MIL PLANNING FOR ELECTION
SUPPORT ADVANCES

REF: A. USNATO 0709

B. USNATO 0767

Classified By: POLITICAL MINISTER-COUNSELOR TOM COUNTRYMAN FOR REASONS

1.5 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) Following the NAC decision reported in ref A, operational planning has accelerated for the deployment of one Italian NRF land battalion plus a command element to provide election security support in Afghanistan. Italian military officials have told ODC Rome that the 3rd Alpini battalion based in Pinerolo (near Turin), a component of the Taurinense brigade, has been tapped for the job.

¶2. (C) On July 26 the Joint Forces Command (Commando Operativo Interforze-COI) conveyed to ODC Rome specific strategic lift requirements. ODC officials estimate that the COI has furnished approximately 85 percent of the information that Transcom will need to begin selecting airframes for the mission. The main cargo and personnel load has been identified, according to ODC, with remaining "hot cargo" (munitions) requirements still outstanding.

¶3. (C) A EUCOM air lift coordinator will meet July 27 with COI officials to discuss the mission's lift requirements and the COI's preferred deployment schedule. ODC Rome indicates that the COI's current plan is to begin deploying to the AOR on 23 August and have all forces/equipment on the ground by mid-September. Italian military planners say this schedule will help keep costs down and maximize operational readiness.

¶4. (C) Comment: The most difficult task ahead will be matching up Italy's preferred deployment plan with the availability of U.S. stratlift during the August/September window. Italy deeply appreciates the USG offer to provide for transporting its troops and equipment to Afghanistan. We are hopeful that this will make Italian military planners flexible in working out a deployment schedule compatible with Transcom's operational constraints. End Comment.

¶5. (U) Minimize Considered.

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